

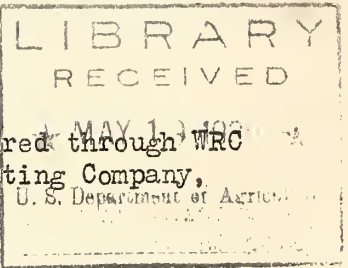
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W3777

APRIL WEATHER AND CROPS



A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered through WRC and 35 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Wednesday, May 7, 1930.

How do you do, friends-- When we consider the country as a whole, April weather had several important aspects as affecting agricultural interests. In the Northeast it was relatively quite similar to that of March, as the first and middle parts of the month were quite warm and the latter part abnormally cold, with unusually low temperatures for the season extending southward to North Carolina and Tennessee. Otherwise, the month was warmer than normal practically everywhere, the mean temperatures being mostly from 4° to 9° above the seasonal average. Rainfall was scanty in most sections of the country. In the extreme Southeast, in parts of the Lake region and upper Ohio Valley, and over the western Great Plains, extending southward to the lower Rio Grande Valley, the monthly totals were rather large and mostly above normal, but in the Atlantic States from the Carolinas northward rainfall was scanty, and was markedly deficient over a large section of the interior extending from the upper Ohio Valley and middle Appalachian Mountains southwestward to Oklahoma and Texas; some localities in this area had only 4 or 5 per cent of the normal rainfall.

A month ago we spoke of droughty conditions in the Southwest adversely affecting the growth of winter wheat and other crops. This drought continued and was intensified during the first three weeks of April, but was rather generally relieved by substantial rains during the last week of the month. In the meantime, however, a widespread need of moisture developed in other large areas. Over much of the country east of the Mississippi River rainfall has been deficient since last fall. A large section, extending from the east Gulf States northeastward over the Atlantic area, had only 50 to 75 per cent of normal rainfall during the three winter months, and the amounts were scanty the first two spring months nearly every where from the Mississippi Valley eastward. The total rainfall for the last two months has been only 25 to 50 per cent of normal in the Mississippi Valley from Missouri and central Illinois southward to the Gulf, while in the Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Tennessee, and the Ohio Valley but little more than 50 to 75 per cent of normal has occurred. Because of this accumulated deficiency in moisture, covering in many places the last five months, the soil has become unusually dry for the season over a large area of the eastern United States, and in many places all growing crops are urgently in need of rain. The dryness has been unusually favorable for forest fires, and many are raging in the east. During the last few hours droughty conditions in the lower Mississippi Valley and eastern Texas have been relieved by good rains.

Farm work is still generally well abreast of the season. The seeding of small grains in most Northern States is rapidly nearing completion and cotton planting is well along in the South. In the West, corn planting has begun well toward the northern limit of the Corn Belt and is advancing in the East. Winter wheat is now making rather satisfactory progress, especially in the western belt, since the recent rains, but the crop needs moisture in most Eastern and Southern States. Soil moisture is now mostly sufficient for present needs of wheat in the heavy producing Plains States, with further

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beneficial showers in Kansas during the last few days, but much wheat is poor to only fair in the southern third of that State because of previous drought, and it is heading on short straw in Oklahoma. The weather has been generally favorable for spring wheat; the soil is mostly in good condition, seeding is rapidly nearing completion, and germination is satisfactory, while early-seeded fields are growing well. As to cotton, recent rains in the western belt have been very helpful. In Texas fields are clean, stands mostly good, and progress of the early-seeded is now satisfactory. Some cotton is up in Oklahoma, and recent weather has been favorable in most parts of Arkansas. In nearly all other sections of the belt, however, the situation is much less satisfactory. Because of persistently widespread drought, germination is slow, stands are irregular, and growth of early-planted cotton is being retarded. So far this year, and taken as a whole, the weather has been unusually favorable over the western half of the country, especially over the Northwestern States. The rather frequent showers have favored dry-land farming and the growth of range grass, while the mild temperatures have been helpful to livestock, especially for lambing.

Late reports of the effect on fruit of the April freeze in the important commercial apple sections of the Virginias, indicate that damage has been spotted, and, in general, less than was first feared. The amount of harm depends largely on the advancement of trees and the topographic condition of the orchards, most low-lying sections and early-blooming trees being badly harmed, and many late-blooming varieties and favorably located orchards largely escaping. Damage apparently has been greatest in the southern sections of the apple country. Elsewhere in the area experiencing freezing weather during the latter part of April there was considerable, and in places serious, harm to early fruit, such as cherries, plums, and, in some cases, peaches, but apples apparently were not greatly involved. In the Pacific States deciduous fruits have been generally favored, while citrus are doing well in both California and Florida.